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COLUMBIA SEMINARY DAY
FEBRUARY 17, 1935



A
NECESSARY MEANS
TO
A GREAT END

Theological Education and the Life of the Church

THE supreme task of organized Christianity is the winning of men to Christ. The Master's words, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," have rightly been called the Great Commission. They constitute a program for the ages, given to the Church by Him who was its founder and its Lord, and, therefore, perpetually binding upon it. The Church can be worthy of its name only as it gives itself whole-heartedly to the accomplishment of this task.

It is also true, although it has perhaps not been generally recognized, that the Church has no other means so essential to the accomplishment of its mission as is that of training the men who are to be ministers of the Gospel. The proclamation of the truth both at home and abroad must of necessity depend largely on the leadership of men who, having heard the Master's call, have also been adequately trained for their great enterprise. From the evident need for this training arises the absolute necessity for the theological seminary. In this connection it is well for us to remember that the principal effort of the Lord Himself, during the days of His ministry, does not seem to have been devoted to reaching the multitudes, unsparingly though He did give Himself to the task of teaching and healing and preaching. The thing which does seem to have concerned Him most was the training of the twelve men who were to carry on His work after He had gone—the conducting of the first Christian theological seminary, if you please. He took these men, ignorant, uncouth, and unpromising as they were, and of them He moulded a force which reached untold multitudes and changed the history of the world. In this fact is the Magna Charta of the theological seminary.

In the life of the Church today it is more than ever essential that leaders shall be trained for service. By faith these men must walk with Jesus still and learn of Him during that period of training, else all their mental development is vain. At the same time they must be given the best of intellectual discipline and the finest tools of scholarship in order that they may meet the challenge of the world in which they live. This particular type of education simply cannot be given by the state, however much the civil authorities may do for our young men and women in every other branch of learning. The Christian Church *must* equip and maintain adequate theological seminaries for itself today, or it will face inevitable decay and possible disaster on the morrow.

Columbia Theological Seminary and the Life of the Southern Presbyterian Church

WHEN Columbia Seminary was founded on December 15, 1828, it was because of a widespread demand that a qualified and native ministry should be prepared to meet the needs of its section. Its founders in the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia declared from the very beginning of the institution their conviction that they were called of God to "light up another sun which shall throw further West the light of the Gospel." The reality of that call has been attested by the abundant fruitage of their efforts.

At the time Columbia Seminary was founded it was the theological institution of one Synod which had 128 churches, 73 ministers, 11 licentiates, and 8,560 members. One hundred years later it had become the seminary of five Synods having among them a total of 1,171 churches, 134,770 members, and 632 ordained ministers. For a large part of that growth in Presbyterianism in the states of Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, and South Carolina, it was directly responsible through the ministers whom it trained. At the same time, however, it was contributing generously of its graduates to the work in other sections of our own land and in the Foreign Mission Field.

In fields of intellectual, ecclesiastical, and spiritual leadership, this institution has made through the years a contribution of amazing significance, and there is no sphere of our Church's life in which its influence has not been felt. When the first General Assembly of the Southern Presbyterian Church was organized in 1861, thirteen of the fifty-two commissioners were alumni of Columbia Seminary. It was a son of this institution, Dr. B. M. Palmer, who became the first Moderator of this body and who took so active a part in shaping its early history. It was one of its greatest professors, Dr. James Henley Thornwell, who was responsible for the Assembly's first public utterance—"The Address to the Churches of Christ Throughout the World"—and who later played the leading part in preparing our Book of Church Order. To another son of the seminary, Dr. J. Leighton Wilson, our Church owes an imperishable debt of gratitude for inspiring and developing the early foreign mission work of our Assembly; and to another professor, Dr. Charles Colcock Jones, a similar debt for his work in the promotion of home missions, especially among the negroes. Indeed, one can scarcely call to mind many of the great names connected with the life of Columbia Seminary without also remembering most of the great moments and movements in the history of our Church. Such are the names of Goulding and Leland and Howe; of Adger and Girardeau and Wilson; of Woodrow and Reed and White; of Stillman and DuBose, and of many another who cannot be mentioned for lack of space.

Columbia Seminary has educated for the Gospel Ministry a total of 1,098 men and has given special courses to more than two hundred others. Of those who are graduates of this institution, some 425 are alive today and the most of this number are actively at work in the

pastorates of our Church. Of the 53 sons of the institution who have gone as missionaries to the foreign field, 13 are in active service today, and other graduates in recent years have been prevented from entering upon this service only by the inability of our Committee to send out new workers. Year by year the seminary is sending out new groups of young ministers who are bearing a noble part in the work of our Assembly and making a contribution to all the great enterprises of the Kingdom.

The Challenge of A Present and Future Opportunity

GREAT as has been the service rendered by Columbia Seminary in the past, there is reason to think that it will be used even more abundantly in years to come. The near future will unquestionably witness developments in the Southeastern States which will demand a great forward step on the part of all Christian Forces, and if our Church is to take its rightful part in that movement, it must have in this section a suitable base for the training of its young ministers. To that end Columbia is steadily seeking to improve its service to its students that it may send out men today who are thoroughly equipped for their task, and that it may be prepared when the time comes to care for that enlarged student body which is not desirable at present. In the meanwhile, it is steadily broadening the sphere of its activities by offering additional training opportunities for laymen and ministers alike, and is making a greatly needed contribution to the life of its Synods in this respect. Something of the extent of these activities can be realized from the fact that 156 church leaders of Atlanta are now enrolled in its mid-winter extension school, that 16 ministers, representing five states, have just attended its Rural Ministers Conference for a two weeks period, and that more than fifty other ministers are expected to attend the Pastors' Institute which will be held at the Seminary in May.

The Reason for Columbia Seminary Day

During recent years Columbia Seminary has been seriously handicapped by inadequate endowment and by reduced support from the churches. In order that this situation may be remedied and that the work of the institution may not be imperiled, Sunday, February the 17th, has been set by the constituent Synods as Columbia Seminary Day and friends of the school have been asked to remember it especially at that time. Every possible economy in operation has been effected, yet only a generous offering on that date will enable the Seminary to close its fiscal year with no deficit and to face the future unafraid. Contributions may be made through the local churches, or, where this is preferred, mailed direct to Columbia Seminary, Decatur, Ga. This message is placed in your hand to request your interest in and—if possible—your financial assistance for a great work. Whatever you may give will help, not only in the support of the Seminary, but also in the furtherance of the entire work of our Church.